



**State of Tennessee  
Department of State  
Tennessee State Library and Archives**

**Bethel United Methodist Church (Clarksville, Tenn.)  
Records, 1834-2009**

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**COLLECTION SUMMARY**

**Creator:**

Bethel United Methodist Church (Clarksville, Tenn.)

**Inclusive Dates:**

1834-2009

**Scope & Content:**

Collection consists of three boxes of materials. An oversized box contains the original deed (wooden plaque) along with newspaper clippings and church publications documenting Bethel's history. A second box holds church documents detailing information about trustees, members, ministers, and donations. It also contains newspaper clippings, administrative documents, and obituaries. The third box contains the historical church register and Sunday school record books.

**Physical Description/Extent:**

3 cubic feet

**Accession/Record Group Number:**

Mf. 2000

**Language:**

English

**Permanent Location:**

Mf. 2000 (available only on microfilm)

**Repository:**

Tennessee State Library and Archives, 403 Seventh Avenue North, Nashville, Tennessee, 37243-0312

**Administrative/Biographical History**

Bethel United Methodist Church, formerly Bethel Methodist Episcopal Church, South, was established in September 1834 in Montgomery County, Tennessee. It is one of the oldest churches in the county still in use. Major Manoah Bostick, a Revolutionary War soldier, deeded one acre of land to the trustees of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, as the site for a meeting house. The original worship place was a log structure which had been used since at least 1812.

In addition to the church lot, Major Manoah Bostick gave land to be used for camp meetings. Such camp meetings were major religious and social attractions for frontier folk. People from all around the region would attend for days to hear evangelical circuit riders preach. During this period, Americans, especially those on the frontier, were experiencing a phenomenon known as the Second Great Awakening and believed that such religious revivals saved souls. The Bostick land was known as Camp Ground Hill and later as White Bluff.

A frame building replaced the log-style church. This more modern structure had two doors, one each for men and women. Slaves sat on a platform near the back of the church. In 1853, the congregation moved to a brick structure built by slaves on the Elliott farm. In addition to worship, Bethel Church also was used as a post office and storehouse.

Straddling the Tennessee-Kentucky line, Camp Campbell (now Fort Campbell) was built near the church after the United States entered World War II. Due to its historical significance, the U. S. Government left the church in the hands of the trustees, saving it from demolition. Construction projects on U.S. Route 41-A again threatened the church's existence, but with intervention by the General Assembly, it was saved. The church resides between the north- and south-bound lanes of U.S. Highway 41-A (locally, Fort Campbell Boulevard).

The 1853 church structure underwent major renovations between the 1940s and late 1960s. Four Sunday schools were added in the early 1940s, and seven new rooms were built in the early 1950s. The final phase of new construction occurred in 1969 when a new kitchen, roof, central heating and air conditioning unit, and fellowship hall completed the additions.

Bethel United Methodist Church was a leader in the innovation of church worship. Around 1908, it conducted what may have been one of the first religious services to be radio broadcast in the Southeast. Harvey W. Hunt, supervisor of the local telephone exchange, connected wires from the church to his home telephone so his sick mother would not miss the service.

According to tradition, even the Bell Witch once attended a service at the church. Family lore has it that she recited the morning sermon at the Bell home during supper, her recitation being verbatim. It was one of two sermon recitations the witch supposedly gave to the Bell family.

Several significant anniversaries have been observed over the last several decades. The church celebrated its 170<sup>th</sup> anniversary on October 17, 1982. Bethel recognized the 140<sup>th</sup> anniversary of worship in the current sanctuary on October 30<sup>th</sup>, 1994.

## **Organization/Arrangement of Materials**

Arrangement established by the owners of the records was maintained.

## **Conditions of Access and Use**

### **Restrictions on Access:**

No restrictions.

### **Restrictions on Use and Reproduction:**

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## **Index Terms**

### **Corporate Names/Organizations/Government Bodies:**

Bethel United Methodist Church (Clarksville, Tenn.)

### **Subjects:**

Circuit riders -- History -- Tennessee -- 19<sup>th</sup> century  
Methodist Church -- History -- 19<sup>th</sup> century -- Sources  
Methodist Church -- History -- 20<sup>th</sup> century -- Sources  
Revivals -- History -- Tennessee -- 19<sup>th</sup> century

### **Geographic Names:**

Clarksville (Tenn.) -- Church history -- Sources

**Document Types:**

Account books  
Clippings (Books, newspapers, etc.)  
Deeds  
Invitations  
Letters  
Obituaries  
Photographs  
Publications  
Programs

**Acquisition and Appraisal****Provenance and Acquisition:**

The Reverend Cynthia Talley of Bethel United Methodist Church loaned the records for microfilming.

**Processing and Administrative Information****Preferred Citation:**

Bethel United Methodist Church (Clarksville, Tenn.) Records, 1834-2009,  
Tennessee State Library and Archives

**Processing Information:**

Prepared for microfilming by Jody Trisdale, completed on April 26, 2012.

**Existence and Location of Originals:**

Bethel United Methodist Church, 3180 Fort Campbell Boulevard,  
Clarksville, TN 37042

**Electronic Location and Access:**

<http://www.tn.gov/tsla/history/manuscripts/findingaids/mf2000.pdf>

## DETAILED COLLECTION DESCRIPTION

### CONTAINER LIST

Contents/Item Title	Date	Box	Folder
Deed	September 1834	1	1
Ministers of Bethel United Methodist Church	undated	1	2
Ministers of Bethel United Methodist Church	undated	1	3
Historical Church Register	1876-1917	1	4
<i>The United Methodist Reporter of the Tennessee Conference</i>	August 14, 1987	1	5
<i>The United Methodist Reporter of the Tennessee Conference</i>	October 15, 1982	1	5
<i>The United Methodist Reporter</i> , Clarksville District	February 5, 1988	1	5
<i>The United Methodist Reporter of the Tennessee Conference</i>	January 22, 1988	1	5
<i>The United Methodist Reporter</i> , Clarksville District	November 6, 1987	1	5
<i>The United Methodist Reporter</i> , Clarksville District	September 18, 1987	1	5
<i>The United Methodist Reporter</i> , Clarksville District	September 2, 1988	1	5
<i>The United Methodist Reporter of the Tennessee Conference</i>	August 12, 1988	1	5
<i>The United Methodist Reporter</i> , Clarksville District	February 5, 1988	1	5
<i>The United Methodist Reporter of the Tennessee Conference (2 copies)</i>	July 3, 1987	1	5
<i>Clarksville Leaf-Chronicle</i>	undated	1	5
United Methodist Bicentennial Edition	June 17, 1984	1	5
Clipping-Carl Gadsey ( <i>Leaf-Chronicle</i> )	n.d.	1	5
Bethel Methodist Church History	1995	2	1
Bethel United Methodist Church Histories, Ministers, and Donations	October 1966-August 1988	2	2
Bethel United Methodist Church History (Duplicate copies)	undated	2	3
Bethel United Methodist Church Photographs	1890-2002	2	4
Bethel United Methodist Church--Newspaper Clippings, Misc.	December 1957-March 1988	2	5

Bethel United Methodist Church--Historical Marker	July 1979-September 1982	2	6
Bethel United Methodist Church--Members, Donations	October 1972-1987	2	7
Deeds	January 1834-January 1984	2	8
<i>The Bethel Courier</i> , Newsletters	1979-1988	2	9
Administrative Board, Budget, Debts	1964-June 1988	2	10
Programs	December 1964-May 1986	2	11
Church Histories	September 1976-1999	2	12
170 Years Celebration	September-October 1982	2	13
212 Years Celebration	October 1998	2	14
Homecoming 1980	August-September 1980	2	15
175 Years Celebration	December 1986-July 1987	2	16
Homecoming 2002-190 Years Celebration	September 2002	2	17
Obituaries	1940- August 2009	2	18
Historical Church Register	1878	3	1
Record Book--Sunday School	1890	3	2
Record Book--Sunday School	1892	3	3
Record Book--Sunday School	1894	3	4
Record Book--Sunday School	1897	3	5
Record Book--Sunday School	1898	3	6
Record Book--Sunday School	1901	3	7
Record Book--Sunday School	1903	3	8
Record Book--Sunday School	1905	3	9
Record Book--Sunday School	1908	3	10
Record Book--Sunday School	1911	3	11
Church Register	1916	3	12
Record Book--Sunday School	1918	3	13
Record Book--Sunday School	1921	3	14
Record Book--Sunday School	1926	3	15
Record Book--Sunday School	1927	3	16
Record Book--Sunday School	1929	3	17
Record Book--Sunday School	1934	3	18

Record Book--Sunday School	1934	3	19
Record Book--Sunday School	1944	3	20
Record Book--Membership and Church	1956	3	21
Record Book--Our Guests	1958	3	22
Photograph Album	undated	3	23